

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – APRIL 8, 2008

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
 - The State Highway Administration has begun surveying work as part of its project to upgrade major intersections that serve NNMC.
 - On March 3, the Navy announced the contract awarded for the first (and major) construction phase at NNMC. No actual construction can begin before the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed, but the award will enable the contractor to begin administrative and pre-construction activities on campus.
 - On March 4, Admiral Jeffries, the NNMC Base Commander, met with County Executive Leggett to discuss BRAC issues of mutual concern, including off-campus transportation mitigations.
 - On April 3, NNMC hosted a briefing on the Final EIS for the BRAC Committee. BRAC schedule:
 - The Final EIS was released in early April 4. The biggest change from the Draft EIS was the Navy's support for DAR certification for two projects: expanded access to Metro station (elevators and underpass from east side), and turn lanes into main MD 355 gates. NNMC also commits to achieving LEED Silver certification for new construction.
 - The Record of Decision (ROD) is expected to be signed in early May, no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the Final EIS
 - If the ROD is signed in early May, construction is expected to begin in earnest in late May or early June.
 - It is anticipated that construction activities at NNMC will be completed by late 2010 in order to meet the Sept. 2011 statutory deadline to relocate Walter Reed facilities to Bethesda.
 - The County has submitted its request to renew the OEA grant that funds the BRAC Coordinator position for another year. The request is pending.
 - Annapolis: The General Assembly passed a BRAC Enterprise Zone bill that provides tax incentives for BRAC-related development in distressed communities. This bill does not apply to NNMC BRAC because the County is not seeking greater development relating to BRAC

- Annapolis: The General Assembly repealed the “tech tax” that was enacted late last year. A new “millionaires tax” was enacted but did not entirely replace the revenues of the tech tax so \$50 million was taken from the Transportation Fund. This can impact all the new BRAC projects that had been programmed in the Consolidated Transportation Program, including the \$45 million intersection upgrades project. It remains to be determined exactly how the funding changes will affect each BRAC action in the State.
- OEA is working with all regional BRAC communities to see if there are federal funding opportunities for their off-campus BRAC-related projects. Meetings are scheduled for next month to coordinate OEA, MDOT, DBED and local and regional agencies involved in all regional BRAC-related project proposals.
- The GAO issued an April 1 report on the status of DOD funding for BRAC-related infrastructure and road improvements. – The DAR Program. It is on our web site (Transportation page). It was produced prior to the Navy’s decision to seek DAR certification for Bethesda projects. It does note that projects like Bethesda don’t currently qualify for DAR certification under DOD regulations – so DOD needs to alter its regulations in Bethesda’s case.
- Phil discussed the importance of the Navy’s changed position about DAR certification. He emphasized that this is just the beginning of a complex process that does not guarantee funding under the DAR program, but that it constitutes a very critical endorsement by the Navy that these projects should be funded by the federal government because they have been necessitated by the BRAC action. The Navy’s support for DAR certification will be used to convince key Members of Congress to authorize and appropriate funds for these projects. Phil emphasized that this is not about Montgomery County needing these projects, but that the federal government’s intention to make the expanded Walter Reed facility succeed as the military’s flagship military medical center is dependent on doctors and patients having clear access to the campus. A strategy to pursue federal funding may entail working with Members of Congress from other BRAC-growth communities who may also seek funding for projects being considered for DAR certification.
- John Carman initiated a discussion of the Committee’s reaction to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was released on Friday, April 4, 2008, and whether the Committee should send a letter to County Executive Leggett about the FEIS. The Committee was in unanimous agreement that Phil should draft such a letter. Phil said he would disseminate a draft to the Committee by the end of the week, so that a final version could be approved at the April 15 Committee meeting. The Committee’s main points included:
 - Appreciation that the Final EIS represented a genuine effort by the Navy to acknowledge its role as a community stakeholder and respond to public concerns

that has been raised about the Draft EIS, even if some concerns had not been resolved satisfactorily.

- Praised the Navy's reversal of its position in the DEIS that dismissed the possibility of certification for Defense Access Road (DAR) funding for certain off-campus transportation mitigations projects.
 - Urging the County Executive to work proactively with NNMC and all levels of government to fund and implement traffic mitigation projects that have been identified by the Committee, including the intersection upgrades, projects identified for DAR certification, pedestrian path improvements, a feasibility study for a Beltway slip ramp, and a comprehensive area transportation study.
 - Other positive development include addressing the issue of housing for outpatients and families, and the intention that new campus construction be certified Silver according to the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program.
 - A strong belief that that NNMC should establish an ongoing community relations liaison rather than rely on the BRAC Committee, whose charter expires in 2011. Contractors should be monitored and held accountable, with a point of contact available when issues arise during the construction phase. NNMC should make available web-based information about construction or any other campus news or activities relevant to the community.
 - Appreciation that NNMC has hired a transportation coordinator, but concern that NNMC has not developed a clear and specific Transportation Management Plan and that NNMC should consider creative solutions to traffic issues.
- John initiated a discussion on how the Committee should proceed now that the NEPA process is headed towards closure and construction at NNMC commences. The Committee will continue to be the community's eyes and ear during the construction phase and will be involved in the effort to secure funds for long-term transportation projects.
 - John announced the agendas for next week's meeting:
 - Finalize a letter to County Executive Leggett regarding the Final EIS, and
 - Detailed discussion, led by Park & Planning and DPWT, to add to the County's Capital Improvements Program a project to upgrade pedestrian paths in the area of NNMC.

- John solicited comments from the floor. It was requested that next week's discussion of pedestrian paths include participation by bicycle advocates and consideration of proposals to connect NNMC-area paths into a greater Bethesda pathway plan.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center, at 7:30 p.m.

Committee members in attendance, April 8, 2008:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator
 Jon Alterman, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Assn.
 Pat Baptiste
 John Carman, Committee Chairman
 Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital
 Royce Hanson, M-NCPPC
 Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.
 Ginanne Italiano, GBCCC
 Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Assn.
 Deborah Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Assn.
 Mohammad Siddique, DPWT
 Geoff Biddle for David Smith, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board
 Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Assn.
 Ron Wilson for Dan Wheeland, NIH

Ex-officio:

Sue Tabach (Sen. Mikulski)
 Ken Reichard (Sen. Cardin)
 Joan Kleinman (Rep. Van Hollen)
 Rebecca Lord (Council Member Berliner)

Other attendees

Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration
 Dennis Coleman, NIH
 Barbara Hankins, League of Women Voters
 Richard Hoye, Council Member Trachtenberg
 Mal Rivkin
 Anthony Terminiello